

GREAT PUBLIC MEETING
OF
THE LIVERPOOL
Wesleyan Methodist Association,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, BOLD STREET,

On Friday Evening, Nov. 21, 1834.

ON Friday evening, November 21, 1834, a meeting of the Class-leaders, Stewards, and Members of the two Liverpool Circuits, was held in the large room, late the Music-hall, Bold-street, for the purpose of hearing an account of the principles and objects of the Wesleyan Methodist Association, and to take into consideration the late extraordinary proceedings of Conference. It was announced in the placard that Dr. Warren, and several other gentlemen from Manchester and elsewhere, would attend; great interest was consequently excited in the minds of the Methodist public; and, by the hour fixed for the meeting, (seven o'clock,) the room, which is capable of containing about 2,000 persons, was crowded almost to suffocation, and we understand that numbers were obliged to go away, unable to obtain admittance. A considerable part of the audience consisted of females. Dr. Warren was introduced to the meeting, and received with loud applause. At the hour appointed for the commencement of the proceedings,

Mr. DAVID ROWLAND rose, and moved that William Smith, Esq., of Reddish-house, near Stockport, should take the chair. It was his duty to state that their excellent and esteemed friend, Mr. Smith, was labouring under extreme indisposition; but, such was his zeal in this great and good cause, that it could not be restrained, and he had felt it his duty to comply with the earnest request of the Committee that he would preside on this occasion, though he did so at great personal hazard.

Mr. BRIDSON seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

The hymn, "Soldiers of Christ, arise, and put your armour on," was then given out, and sung by the meeting.

Mr. JOHN RUSSELL, an old man, upwards of eighty years of age, forty-one of which he has been a class-leader, in an earnest and energetic prayer, invoked the blessing and assistance of God on the proceedings and objects of the meeting.

The CHAIRMAN said that, considering the state of his health, he could not be expected to take any great share in the proceedings of the night. He felt himself very incompetent to preside on this occasion, and nothing could have induced him to take the chair, had it not been that his friends in Liverpool might suspect him of having grown indifferent about this great and good cause. He was one of the old school; (hear, hear,) he had been brought up in that school from his cradle, and his ancestors before him had been members of that Society for upwards of ninety years. He had no hesitation in saying that his principles were Conservative. (Hear, hear.) He would not detain them longer, but come at once to the objects of the meeting. They would hear, from the various speakers, what those objects were. He trusted that all present were members of the old school; but, if some of them were not so, he trusted that all would be convinced of the propriety of becoming old Methodists.

Mr. PICTON, the Secretary, having read the requisition on which the meeting was convened,

Mr. FARRER, Chairman of the Liverpool Branch Association, read the declaration of the Association, and then proceeded as follows:—Mr. Chairman and Brethren,—I have for above twenty years past been engaged in the simple and unobtrusive duties of the Sunday Schools, and I regret the necessity which now calls me forward in this public manner. I should, however, but ill repay the debt I owe to Methodism and the confidence placed in me by my brethren, did I hesitate to perform the duty required at my hands.—At the decease of Mr. Wesley, in 1791, the Conference possessed the power of doing just as they pleased; there was no law to prevent them. It was, however, soon found that it did not answer for every preacher to have the same power which Mr. Wesley had, of expelling whom he would, and retaining whom he pleased. The consequence was, that, a year or two after his death, there were upwards of a hundred addresses presented to Conference demanding a redress of grievances. These were burned without being read. The flames, however, did not destroy the question, and, in 1795, the Conference was compelled to grant a Plan of Pacification, which somewhat lessened the expulsive authority

exercised by the preachers. This, however, was found insufficient, and in the year 1797 further concessions were made, which, upon the whole, were satisfactory to the people. A principal point in dispute was the admission of lay delegates into the Conference, and the end of the matter was, that those who wished it formed themselves into what is called the New Connexion, headed by Mr. Alexander Kilham. The advantages gained by those who remained, consisted, in substance, of the following particulars :—

1. The leaders and officers could neither be received nor expelled, except by a majority of the leaders' meeting,

2. No person who was objected to by the leaders' meeting could be received into the society, and no person could be expelled, except it was proved to a leaders' meeting that he had broken the rules.

3. The quarterly meetings were invested with the management of the temporal affairs of the society, and acknowledged as the proper channel through which the voice of the people should reach the Conference.

After this time the Connexion, upon the whole, went on peaceably and prosperously. Somewhere about the year 1811, the Conference began to act upon a settled system of infringement upon the rights of the people. This was shown in various instances. An organ was forced into Brunswick Chapel, Liverpool, and into Grosvenor-street Chapel Manchester, contrary to law. But as ONLY a few hundred members were sacrificed to the accomplishment of so great a good, I pass them over without further notice. I may here observe, that the various sects of Methodists have been formed principally in consequence of the intolerance of the Conference and its representatives. In Liverpool, in 1825, the preacher tried the doctrine of absolute power, in expelling by his own authority. At that time it was one circuit, and they were a large body of men; consequently their complaint to Conference was listened to, and the grievance redressed. But in order effectually to prevent their again being troublesome, the Leaders were to be met in small sections; and to prevent their having sway in a quarterly meeting, the circuit was shortly afterwards iniquitously divided into two sections. I say *iniquitously*, for one of the greatest men in Conference declared to me, that although he was favourable to a division, yet so much did he disapprove of the mode in which this had been accomplished, that he never expected any good would come out of it. Instances, numberless, of individual acts of tyranny might be adduced, but I pass on at once to the awful events which took place at Leeds in December, 1827, when, by acting upon the principles of absolute power, the finest society in the kingdom was deprived of its brightest ornaments, and 1000 members driven away. After six days' debate upon this question, the Conference of 1828 boldly resolved to face it out; and from that time Methodism has been without a constitution. It is true the preachers have generally been afraid to exercise their new power, but have rather preferred slighting obnoxious individuals, and affectionately exhorting them *quietly to retire*. In the language of the old Tories, they have said, "If you don't like us, leave us." In one thing, however, they have acted firmly, and that is, in resisting the introduction of all topics into the leaders' and quarterly meetings not agreeable to themselves, so that there is now no channel by which any complaint can reach the Conference. In reference to the Leeds case I said it was awful, awful indeed; it is true a thunderbolt did not strike us, and we have received from it no *bodily* injury; but surely that must be an awful concussion in the moral world which has caused Methodism, for seven years, to stagger and reel to and fro, like a drunken man, and finally to totter almost to its fall. How are the mighty fallen, and the beautiful places laid waste! Once, wherever we went, every Methodist was a friend and a brother; but now, does any man travel from his home, how different! It is now needful to inquire whether those into whose company he falls are Whig or Tory—preachers or people's men! Alas! alas! when these things are so. So much in reference to the question of *spiritual* power—"There is now no leader, officer, or member in the Methodist Society, (250,000 though they be) but is liable to be expelled just when the preacher pleased, and to be branded as a wretch not fit to be associated with." I come next to the abuse of power in reference to *temporal* affairs. I pass over many items which might be named as improperly charged to a fund raised for the especial purpose of spreading the gospel in the poor and destitute portions of our country, and come at once to the Theological Institution. It is no part of my business to discuss the propriety or impropriety of such an institution. I may, however, be allowed to say that I am quite satisfied that abundance of well-educated, liberal-minded men, would be glad to enter our Connexion, but under the present discipline this is out of the question. Let this miserable system be swept away, and there will appear no necessity why the Methodists should, more than any other people, first educate, and then keep their preachers. So far as Methodist law is concerned, the Conference has no more right to appropriate one single penny of the Contingent Fund to the support of such an institution, than I have to pick my neighbour's pocket. The consent of the quarterly meetings ought to have been obtained before any such

step was taken. The sum of the whole matter is this—that neither in the temporal nor spiritual affairs of Methodism is there any power possessed which can withstand the Conference and its representatives, who resolutely declare that in the regular meetings nothing vital to Methodism shall be discussed, nor any address or petition be introduced, reflecting in any degree upon the conduct of the Conference. Having advanced my opinion as to the unconstitutional proceedings of the Conference, I now go on to state the objects of the Wesleyan Methodist Association. I commence this division of my subject with the plain and unequivocal declaration, that we want *nothing new in Methodism*. We believe that, fairly construed, the Plan of 1795, and the Concessions of 1797, give us, as a people, quite as much liberty as is desirable or scriptural. Methodism has one peculiar feature distinguishing it from all other denominations—viz. “the itinerancy of its preachers.” It must be quite clear to all acquainted with human nature, that unlimited power possessed by a man coming to reside only two or three years in a place, is a very dangerous weapon, and sure to be frequently capriciously exercised. Our fathers saw and felt this, and threw off the yoke which the Conference is now endeavouring to rivet round our necks. But as Mr. Wesley observed on this very subject, so the Conference now finds that “the people will not thus submit.”—Mr. Farrer then read the following rules:—

1.—That private members be tried according to the rules of the Society, which are put into their hands when they become members; and that the leaders' meeting shall say whether or not the accused be guilty or not guilty; after which the preacher, as judge, shall pronounce sentence.

[At present the quibble is, that the law says the crime shall be proved at a leaders' meeting. Any man of common understanding would conclude that this meant to the satisfaction of such meeting.]

2.—That the leaders and officers be tried by the meetings to which they belong, and be not removed from their office, except by consent of a majority of such meeting.

[The practice of the preachers is to deal with them precisely in the same way as private members. The law in this case is perfectly clear, and was intended to protect them in the exercise of the important duties which devolve upon them as representatives of the Society. In both the cases above named, there must be no appeal to any other tribunal. It is a dangerous power to leave in the hands of Conference, and cannot be of any real service, as it is more than questionable whether any good could arise from the Conference attempting to force a man into any society, a majority of which would not hold communion with him.]

3.—That full scope be given the regular meetings for the discussion of all questions which the people wish to make known to the Conference.

[At present these channels are completely closed, and even within the last fortnight a superintendent declared to a friend of mine that no scope should be allowed in the Quarterly Meetings for any such purposes. Had he granted it, my friend would have given a distinct pledge to attend no more meetings such as this.]

4.—As a guarantee that these things shall be carried into fair and full operation, we require that publicity be given to the proceedings of Conference.

If those proceedings be all right and just, they need not fear this; and if unjust, the sooner they are brought to the light the better, in order that they may be reproved.

Such are the very moderate requirements that we make. It only remains to glance at the measures to be adopted in order to convince the Conference that we, as a people, are in earnest. Through all the previous struggles in Methodism, the preachers have succeeded in cutting off and driving away all those who in any way presumed to interfere with their projects. We think it our duty to remain and demand the restitution of our rights. Of course, the representatives of Conference must exercise their powers and *turn us all out*. Then come the principles of our Association into operation, for if the people will stick to their leaders, every penny which the preachers lose will come into our exchequer, and form a fund to disseminate information, and to maintain those preachers who may lose their living by advocating our cause. Ye Methodist people! this matter rests in your hands—acquaint yourselves with the truth, and defend that you believe to be right. If you be faithful to your trust, not all the wealth and power of the Conference and its supporters can maintain its position for a single year,—for it is *your pence*, not *their pounds*, that will settle this business. It is said by the preachers that the persons who are making this disturbance are ungodly men, and, as such, unworthy your countenance and support. This is untrue—they are now before you all—there is old John Russell, a leader of half a century—the leader of Dr. Warren before he entered the ministry. Is he, a man with one foot in the grave, likely to struggle for *imaginary* rights? There are many others of thirty, twenty, and all the gradations downwards, too numerous to mention, but you may see them.

Mr. Farrer concluded his address by introducing to the notice of the meeting Dr. WARREN.—He was warmly received, and commenced by assuring the meet-

ing that it was impossible for him to express the strong and deep feelings which at that moment possessed his breast. He had addressed many large assemblies in the course of his ministry, as well as many mixed audiences; but never before did he feel such sensations as now, when he found himself in Liverpool in the presence of his venerated, affectionate, and faithful father in Methodism, and in the midst of his townsmen. (Applause.) In addressing a people at once intelligent and pious, he would say, without intending a mere figure of speech, or wishing to be severe or offensive towards any other sect, that he felt especially grateful to God that he was now in the presence of one whom he would call a right reverend father in God, and that was his old and only class-leader, Mr. John Russell. He imbibed his methodistical experience, practice, and principles, under the teaching of that venerable spiritual father. About thirty-five years ago, he was delighted to attend his class meetings, as hundreds of them had done since; and though he (Dr. Warren,) was now a marked man, and accounted a rebel, he was precisely the same in principle and practice as he was when a private member and a local preacher among them. They were now assembled to advocate principles which, as Mr. Farrer had well observed, were not new, but old. They had tasted lately of new wine; but, like the persons mentioned in the Scriptures, they preferred the old, for the old is better. They were now met to drink the same old wine which they had had in Mr. Russell's class thirty years ago. It had kept well, and it was as invigorating as ever. Were he to advocate revolutionary principles in Methodism, or even to stand before them as an innovator on their old constitution, he was sure he would be scouted by them. He was convinced that any innovation at present on the old constitution would be exceedingly detrimental to the body. (Hear.) He was neither a revolutionist nor an innovator. When he spoke of the Conference and the people as two parties, he spoke of them as of the parts of the prophet's staff, which was one, and meant to be one. They could only, however, be one, as Mr. Farrer had observed, by having some constitution to which both parties must consent, and both must pay inviolable attention. (Hear.) Now he asked them if there had been, in late proceedings, a careful observance of this rule? (No.) The fault lay somewhere. It was impossible they could have met that night, as they did, unless they felt that something was wrong; and he put it to them, whether the fault was that of the people, or of the Conference? (Hear, hear.) Had not the people paid the strictest attention to the constitution? He might go through the whole routine of their discipline and show that the people had done their duty nobly, that they had done it with all their heart, and that they had done it long. It was clear, therefore, that the fault lay with the Conference,—that there had been a departure from the constitution on their part, and not on the part of the people. He contended that they were now taking constitutional means to bring things back to their right state. In meeting to-night they were taking no other steps than the Conference was forcing them to take. (Hear.) The occurrences in 1827 at Leeds had been referred to, and every heart that valued the spiritual prosperity of Methodism must feel a pang when they thought of those events. Those proceedings had given exquisite pain and sorrow to the heart of his lately departed friend and brother, and pillar of Methodism, the Reverend Dr. Clarke. (Hear, hear.) He would read them his words in reference to that unhappy business, as he had them from an intelligent friend and preacher of the body, who was an intimate friend and correspondent of Dr. Clarke. He writes thus:—"Dr. Clarke says to me in a letter now lying before me, dated 6th February, 1830, 'I believe the Leeds affair has sown the seeds of dissension through every part of our Connexion. I have seen Methodism in its nonage, I have seen it in its perfection, and I am afraid I now see it in its decline.'" Such were the powerful and well-weighed words of that venerated character.—Dr. Warren then proceeded to read an extract from another letter written by Dr. Clarke, dated Millbrook, near Prescott, July 14, 1818, wherein he says,—“The Book Committee have done all they could to injure me, in the opinion not only of my brethren, but of the religious public; theirs has been a ceaseless persecution of a man whom the God who knows his heart, knows has incessantly devoted whatever power or influence he has possessed to accredit and defend Methodism; and who, for the sake of his attachment to Methodism, and Methodist Preachers, has refused honours and emoluments of no trifling moment. They have done what they could, to drive me from a Connexion which they knew I would never of my own accord leave, and force me to renounce it, in order to do justice to myself. They have encouraged despicable scribblers to encumber the pages of the Magazine with calumny and partially covered reproach, and would not suffer either myself or my friends to be heard in vindication.” Dr. Warren then said he felt no hostility to the Conference. There were not two preachers in the Connexion to whom he would not hold out the hand of brotherly love the moment they would only say, “We will now be together as we were thirty-five years ago!” He did not appear there to say any thing vindictive against his brethren. But what he said arose from a conviction that they must

co-operate with each other to obtain a speedy adjustment of this painful struggle. It was painful for him to speak of himself, and he would not do it. He had published a book which many of them had read. Other parties had written against it, but every fact in his book remained unconfuted to that hour. The British public, as well as the British Methodists, think for themselves, and know right from wrong. Those who had perused his book would know very well his opinion as to the way in which he had been treated by the Conference. It was for the public to judge whether he had been allowed freely to explain his actions and motives, and to clear himself from the aspersions which were brought against him when he stood before them in July and August. His motives were disinterested, but they were unwelcome, because they were declared in behalf of the people. (Hear.) With regard to the proceedings of the Manchester Special District Meeting, he would not detain them, as the newspapers had already spoken out on the subject. In a pamphlet which he would publish next week, he would show, by a plain and incontrovertible statement, that he was unmethodistically and unconstitutionally suspended from the ministry. God having given him a dispensation to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he (Dr. Warren) durst not be silent; and though the District Meeting had suspended him, he would not hold his tongue. (Hear.) The Methodist constitution had guarded the ministerial character with more securities than the District Meeting seemed disposed to observe when they suspended a preacher whose morals were correct, whose doctrine was unimpeached, and whose motives were pure. The Methodist constitution had provided that no preacher should be suspended without the concurrence of the people. No District Meeting had that power. No preacher would be safe to enter the Connexion if he could be suspended at the pleasure of the District Meeting alone.—Doctor Warren then read a rule from the Plan of Pacification agreed to in 1795 relative to the trial and suspension of preachers whose practice was immoral or their doctrine erroneous. By that rule it was stipulated that the stewards and leaders should each have a vote, and that then, if found guilty, the District Committee should appoint another preacher in his place and suspend him until the Conference. The people were thus made a party to the dismissal; and it was expressly declared that “no preacher was to be suspended except by the trial before mentioned.” He appealed to them, then, whether he had been legally suspended? (Cries of “No, no.”) He was happy that they agreed with him in his views of the matter, as he felt safer from having their opinion on his side. The people were in danger from such illegal expulsions as well as the preachers, and if his brethren were unwilling to have liberty from this bondage, why, they must force it upon them. Dr. Warren then alluded to some other cases of oppression which had occurred at Manchester, particularly to that of Mr. Greenhalgh, who had been expelled the Society because he had attended what was pronounced an illegal meeting. That meeting was illegal, because he (Dr. Warren) being suspended, had presided as superintendent. But if, as he had shown, his suspension was illegal, then, upon the same principle, the expulsion of Mr. Greenhalgh was equally illegal.—It had been declared by a person whom he would not name, that the proceedings of Pacification, and the Rules adopted at Leeds in 1795 and 1797, were a mere juggle, and altogether unnecessary. He was, however, happy to hear a person, who was capable of judging, say, and he entirely agreed in the sentiment, that those two public documents were exceedingly valuable,—they were the Magna Charta of Methodism. (Hear, hear.) They were altogether the most valuable documents existing. They ought to be studied by every body connected with the Society, and, like the golden letters of Pythagoras, they ought to be repeated day and night. It had been said by some that that meeting was convened to bring forward some new measure in the constitution of Methodism. He denied that. They wanted nothing new, whilst there existed those two great and important documents, and they, with those laws in existence, could bring matters back to their original state. In the next place, according to those documents, it was enacted that every preacher should have the right of expressing his opinion, and in order to secure the free expression of their opinions, they were to be given by ballot. In that there was nothing new, for it was in continual practice. Again, it was said that the people should be present at Conference. In that there was nothing new, for many of them would recollect seeing persons present—both members and those who were not, at meetings of the Conference in this town. (Hear, hear.) It therefore appeared to him, that the steps they were taking that night, in that place and elsewhere, were the only effectual means of keeping themselves safe; that was, by being united and steadfast. If they submitted, and became disunited, they would be cut off in detail, and all would be lost. But if they persevered in the course proposed by respectable lay gentlemen, all would be preserved. He, therefore, urgently pressed upon them the necessity of being united—let what would happen, he prayed of them not to forget the word “union.” Nothing should induce them to leave the society. Let nothing lead them to leave the body, not even if their names were erased from the Society, but that they would still swim in the ship with Metho-

dism so long as she had a bottom. (Cheers.) It had been said of him that he must either be mad, or that he intended to leave the Methodists, or he would not act as he had done. But he would say to that, he had almost said, wicked insinuation, that so long as Methodism had one plank afloat, Samuel Warren would be the last to quit her. (Loud applause.) He had heard, too, that it had been said at head-quarters, (in speaking of the Methodist Preachers, he meant to make no allusion to their private characters, which he believed to be unimpeachable,) that they were prepared to cut off 10,000 members. ("Shame, shame.") But he must tell them that before they could put down the principle on which he acted, they must cut off 30,000. He had letters from all parts of the country congratulating him on the step he had taken, and he had received one from Edinburgh that day stating that his friends there were united in the same cause. (Applause.) The Reverend Doctor then alluded to the aspersions that had been cast on his pamphlet, and stated that one person had purchased 200 copies and put them in the fire. This only gave the printer and bookseller more work, and would increase the funds for circulating religious knowledge. It was something like the priest in Ireland, who took away a Testament from a poor boy and burnt it before his face, but the boy, after looking disappointed for a moment, suddenly turned to him and said, "Thank God, your Reverence can't burn the two chapters I have got by heart." So let it be with them; the knowledge they had acquired could not be destroyed. (Cheers.) He again entreated them to continue united, for the very constitution of Methodism was to promote the glory of God, and the interests and salvation of their fellow creatures. (Hear, hear.) In conclusion, he hoped they would allow him to urge upon them the necessity of attending to their private duties more punctually than ever; to be constant in their attendance at their meetings, and especially at the house of God; to "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." (Applause.)

Mr. ROWLAND next addressed the meeting as follows:—

SIR,—You, and my Christian friends who know me, will believe me when I say that I lament the necessity which has placed you in that chair, and this meeting in our present circumstances. I say necessity; and who will deny, after the forcible statements which have already been made, that we are here by a dire, a hard necessity. Yet this feeling of regret is mitigated by the consideration that we have afforded us an opportunity of indulging in some of the best feelings of the human heart, of discharging an interesting, a high, and a sacred duty, namely,—of sympathizing with some of the suffering members of the body of Christ, the Church. Yes, this assembly will recognise the authority which says, (speaking of the mystical body of the Redeemer,) if one member suffer, every member suffers with him. Our Connexion, for many years, has been fertile in furnishing such objects of sympathy. Need I advert to instances? You have them in the learned, laborious, and lamented Clarke and Samuel Drew. You have living instances in Forsyth and Stephens, who have been banished from their functions and their flocks for no crime of immorality, but for differences in matters not essential. There are others who have strong claims upon our sympathy that must not be overlooked. I mean the more than 1000 members of the Society at Leeds, who were cut off for their manly opposition to one of the most lawless outrages that was ever perpetrated under the sacred guise of Christianity in either ancient or modern times; but there are victims of more recent date. I now particularly allude to the case of the excellent Mr. Greenhalgh, whom to know is to love; who, for twenty-five years, has sustained the onerous offices of leader and local preacher, and with a character unstained, unsullied, was last week offered up a sacrifice to the outraged name of religion; and what harm had our brother done? Why, he had dared to expose the nefarious proceedings of that party whose conduct is casting a withering blight over all the interests of Methodism. May I allude to one other victim? I confess I hardly dare trust myself to advert to the circumstances and the name of the pious, learned, and patriotic Samuel Warren, who has had the courage to defy the monster Oppression, and cast himself upon the judgment, the sympathy, and confidence of an affectionate people. And now having indulged in these sympathetic feelings, will you permit me to call the attention of the meeting to the necessity—I use the term most advisedly—the necessity of proceeding as we have begun? Our kind friends affect surprise at the position we have taken; they say, if there be grievances (and, by the bye, there are very few of them but will admit we have some grievances,) why not petition or remonstrate through the regular meetings? The reply simply is, we cannot—it is the high and unscriptural assumption on the part of our superintendent preachers to put no motion to the vote implying the least reflection upon the Conference. I am quite aware that the preachers just now are very busy assuring the simple unsuspecting people that they will carefully convey any complaint, even from a private member, to the Conference,—nay, it is written in the statute-book of Methodism, that the ear of the Conference is open to any complaint. Now, having stated this, allow me to select two cases (out of scores that might be adduced) to illustrate the truth and meaning of this statement. The first case shall be that of a memorial sent

without the sanction of a quarterly meeting. The other shall be that of a regular quarterly meeting address signed by the circuit stewards.—After the justly execrated decisions of the never-to-be-forgotten Special District Meeting at Leeds, we, in Liverpool, felt it to be our duty to notice it accordingly. I, in company with an esteemed friend, informed our then superintendent, the Rev. John Scott, of our intention to bring the whole affair under the consideration of the approaching quarterly meeting. He said he regretted it, but hoped we should think better of it. The quarter-day came; and, when we were about to introduce the subject, Mr. Scott rose in his place, and let in a new light on Methodist law and Methodist usage. He told us that it was not the business of a quarter day to take up subjects of so general a character: that the quarterly meeting was for the settlement of the circuit affairs only. How were we amazed at this new light! This was the doctrine of the superintendent of the Liverpool North Circuit: the superintendent of the Liverpool South Circuit, about the same time, recognised the good old practice, by allowing the introduction of the whole question in that quarterly meeting. Mr. Scott told us he would if we were determined to press the matter, name another day for the discussion. He was asked if such an arrangement would have the same effect upon the Conference as if the business emanated from a quarterly meeting? He said it would, being called by the superintendent. That harmony and good feeling might be preserved in the appointed meeting, he was waited upon two or three days previously with a copy of the address it was intended to submit to the meeting for its adoption or rejection, when he candidly admitted the mildness and Christian spirit which pervaded it, and added, he must meet it in the best way he could. Well, the meeting arrived, and after inflicting a speech, on any thing but the question before us, of two hours' length, at the solemn and still hour of midnight, when all present were looking with intense anxiety for the result of the vote, he concluded by saying, with all the *sang froid* imaginable, "I shall not put these resolutions to the vote." The brethren, so outraged, so insulted, could not refrain from venting forth their feelings in cries of "Shame! shame!" Well, we, notwithstanding, signed and sent our memorial to Conference, of course, wanting the official authority of a quarterly meeting. Why, you will expect we got a very respectful, if not an affectionate address. Indeed, some considerable time elapsed before we knew whether there was any answer at all. At length, two brethren waited upon the Secretary of the Conference, and he gave them their answer, not in writing, but verbally, to the effect, that we must mind our own business. You shall now have the other case in illustration. The Rochdale Circuit addressed the Conference through the quarterly meeting, signed by the circuit steward, to which the Conference replied; but instead of noticing the entreaties, arguments, and remonstrances of the memorial, they reprove the brethren for having introduced such matters into the quarterly meeting, as being foreign to its proper business. This circuit memorialised the following Conference with no better success: they then addressed the President, but have not, to this day, been favoured with a reply. Now here are two cases, one of each kind, selected from innumerable similar instances. Look at them; compare them with the assurance that the paternal ears of Conference are always open to our complaints. Now, Sir, it is these things which render combination, or this association necessary. Our connexional character justifies the step we are taking. Wesleyan Methodists, through the length and breadth of the land, are eminently one family. This is very carefully pressed upon us on certain occasions, but when it is inconvenient, we are asked what have you to do with the College—it is in London?—or with Leeds, or Ashton, or Gateshead? and now, what have you to do with Manchester? I tell you what we have to do. Hitherto, if they have complained, they have been cut off in detail, and I give it as my serious opinion, that but for this Association, the first Manchester Circuit, ancient, and pious, and intelligent as it is, yet for the bold attitude it has taken in rallying round and sustaining their persecuted Minister, would, ere this, have been recklessly blotted out of the map of Methodism. But, say some good, though timid, brethren,—see the mischief you are doing: how you are breaking the peace of society, and hindering the good work of God! Sir, we admit, to some extent, the consequences;—and who can contemplate them and not be pained and grieved?—but we do solemnly deny, in the face of the whole Christian world, that the charge is applicable to us as the cause. No! we fearlessly charge the blame—the whole blame, upon a lordly party in the Conference, who are surrounded by little knots of wealthy, worldly men, whose vitiated tastes must be pleased either with boxes of whistles, or forms of prayers, or now a college, though the consequence may be the scattering of thousands of immortal souls. We the cause!—Why, look at the absurdity of the insinuation. I am walking in the street with a man whom I have mistaken for an honest man; he takes advantage of my credulity by abstracting from me my purse;—I make a stand, surprised and indignant,—the neighbourhood is excited and agitated; but, instead of instantly restoring to me my purse, he cries, "See what a disturbance you are making; how you are exciting men's minds; how you are interrupting the quiet of this peaceful neighbourhood! why cannot you be

easy and let me go?" Others ask, is it worth while to make this ado? had ye not better let it pass? So the man I have just alluded to might reason. "Only think," he says, "of the painful consequences of the course you are pursuing; if you hale me to prison, and expose my conduct, you will plunge my wife into trouble,—my children will be covered with infamy." Now would you think of listening to such reasoning, especially if it came to your knowledge that the man was an old offender? Now, Sir, I contend our opponents, are throwing dust in the people's eyes in attempting to divert attention from the real state of the case; hence, why this profuse distribution of an excellent sermon on schism, but an attempt to fix upon these holy and sensible men surrounding you on the platform the charge of schism? Sir, in all that I have uttered respecting our ministers, I beg it to be understood I speak not of their private—no! nor of their public character, in the common acceptation of the word,—but of their Conferential character; and in this character not doubting that some of them are present, I do now, in the face of the Methodist public, advisedly and deliberately, judging them by their unconstitutional acts, charge them true schismatics. By their public acts they are scattering arrows, firebrands, and death, amidst an affectionate and confiding people. Theirs is the sin—theirs is the guilt, and, if timely concessions be not made, theirs will be the punishment.

The CHAIRMAN, in introducing Mr. John Russell, claimed the indulgence of the meeting for that gentleman, stating that he was eighty-one years of age.

Mr. RUSSELL said that he was very unwilling to come forward before such a meeting, but every man of common sense and sound piety must see that the present was an emergency which called for the exertions of every individual amongst them. (Hear, hear.) He concurred with all his heart and soul in the means now in use for the reformation of Methodism. (Hear, hear.) A serious difference had arisen between the Conference and the people, and yet it originated in very slight grounds. It was only necessary for the Conference to make a very small concession to conciliate the people. As one of the people, with his whole heart and mind, he was desirous of effecting that union. Being so near the grave he felt but little desirous of meddling with public affairs; still he thought that posterity had claims upon him, and he therefore most heartily concurred in the present endeavours to bring about such an extent of reformation as would preserve them a pure, united, and undivided body. (Applause.)

Mr. HESKETH, of Manchester, said he had been connected with Methodism for upwards of forty years, but though he had always endeavoured to understand acts of Parliament, in order that he might know the laws and obey them, he must confess that it was only within the last twelve months that his attention had been directed to the laws of Methodism. For more than forty years he had rested content with the conviction that the Preachers either would not or could not err; but when he saw what was called a District Meeting suspending a young man of talent and estimable character for merely attending four public meetings on a very important question, and for entertaining opinions which he himself, (Mr. H.) entertained in common with him—when he saw a similar meeting suspending his respectable and venerated friend, Dr. Warren, for no better reason, he began to entertain different opinions. (Hear, hear.) He wished that Dr. Warren was not present, in order that he might speak of him as he deserved; but this he would say,—that no man was less wrong, or more amiable than Dr. Warren. (Hear, hear.) Dr. Warren had written a book in which he told some unpleasant truths. For that reason he was summoned before a District Meeting, which played at once the parts of prosecutors, witnesses, and judges, and because he would not submit to their extraordinary proceedings, they expelled him. (Hear, hear.) If they had not read Mr. Bromley's letter on that subject, he recommended them to do so immediately. They had now come forward at the eleventh hour, to advocate the cause of religion—of Methodism—of Christianity, and he trusted, that they would proceed with all care and diligence in the good and right way, till they had effected that reform which they had sought to accomplish. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. DIGNUM, of Northwich, said he had been for forty years connected with the Methodist Society, and for thirty-six years a local preacher. In the neighbourhood of the Town Hall he had seen the motto "England expects every man to do his duty,"—but the whole world now expected Methodists to do their duty. (Hear, hear.)

The meeting was afterwards addressed by Mr. Wallace, of Northwich; Mr. Gressly, of Nantwich; Mr. Henry Pooley, jun. of Liverpool; Mr. John Wood, of Liverpool; Mr. James Gardner, and Mr. Picton, all of whom advocated the cause of Methodist reform, and earnestly exhorted the meeting, private members as well as office-holders, to join the Association by signing the Declaration. The names of the officers and committee having been read, a hymn sung, a prayer delivered by Dr. Warren, and thanks having been voted to the Chairman, the meeting separated at a quarter to eleven o'clock.